

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1.-23. (Canceled)

24. (New) An oligopeptide or polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence with at least 78% identity to SEQ ID NO:14.

25. (New) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 24, which reacts with sera from individuals who are infected with the hepatitis B variant HDB 11.

26. (New) An oligopeptide or polypeptide, comprising an amino acid sequence in which from 0 to 10 amino acids are substituted, deleted or inserted as compared with SEQ ID NO:14.

27. (New) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 26, which reacts with sera from individuals who are infected with the hepatitis B variant HDB 11.

28. (New) An oligopeptide or polypeptide comprising at least 5 consecutive amino acids from SEQ ID NO:12, and comprising at least one of the amino acid positions 54, 61, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 85, 87, and 94 of SEQ ID NO:12.

29. (New) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 28, comprising an amino acid sequence chosen from the amino acid sequences of SEQ ID NO:12 to SEQ ID NO:30.

30. (New) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 28, which reacts with sera from individuals who are infected with the hepatitis B variant HDB 11.

31. (New) A oligopeptide or polypeptide, comprising a length of at least 5 amino acids, and comprising at least one of the amino acid positions 96, 103, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 127, 129, and 136 of SEQ ID NO:12, wherein position 96 is alanine, position 103 is isoleucine, position 114 is alanine, position 115 is isoleucine, position 116 is asparagine, position 117 is asparagine, position 118 is arginine, position 120 is glutamine, position 127 is threonine, position 129 is histidine, and position 136 is tyrosine.

32. (New) The oligopeptide or polypeptide of claim 31, which reacts with sera from individuals who are infected with the hepatitis B variant HDB 11.

33. (New) A composition comprising at least one immunogenic molecule comprising one or more oligopeptides or polypeptides as claimed in one of claims 24 to 32, and optionally further comprising one or more H8V immunogens.

34. (New) A method of preparing the oligopeptide or polypeptide as claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31, which comprises culturing a cell and expressing the oligopeptide or polypeptide in said cell.

35. (New) The method as claimed in claim 34, wherein the oligopeptide or polypeptide is isolated from the cells and separated from other oligopeptides or polypeptides.

36. (New) An antibody which binds to the oligopeptide or polypeptide as claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31.

37. (New) The antibody as claimed in claim 36, which binds to an oligopeptide or polypeptide comprising a sequence with at least 78% identity to SEQ ID NO:14 with higher affinity than to HBs antigens belonging to genotype D, subtype ayw2, of hepatitis B virus.

38. (New) The antibody as claimed in claim 36, which does not bind to HBs antigens belonging to genotype D, subtype ayw2, of hepatitis B virus.

39. (New) An antiidiotypic antibody which represents an amino acid sequence as defined in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31.

40. (New) A kit for detecting hepatitis B viruses, comprising at least one of

- (i) an oligopeptide or polypeptide as claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31;
- (ii) an oligonucleotide or polynucleotide encoding said oligopeptide or polypeptide; and
- (iii) an antibody which recognizes said oligopeptide or polypeptide; and

41. (New) A method for detecting a hepatitis B antigen, comprising

- (a) incubating a sample with the antibody of claim 36 under conditions which allow the formation of antigen-antibody complexes; and
- (b) detecting antigen-antibody complexes.

42. (New) A method of identifying antibodies directed against a hepatitis B antigen, comprising

- (a) incubating a sample with an oligopeptide or polypeptide as claimed in one of claims 24, 26, 28, 29, or 31 under conditions which allow the formation of antigen-antibody complexes; and
- (b) detecting antibody-antigen complexes comprising said oligopeptide or polypeptide.